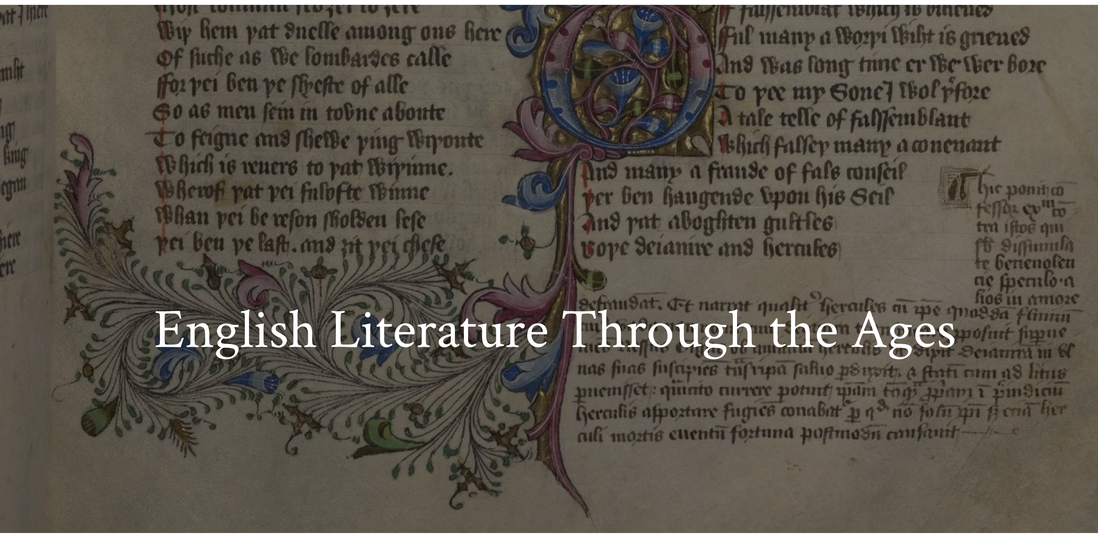


English Literature Through the Ages

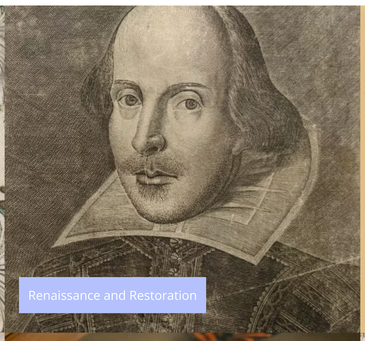
What first comes to mind when you think about English Literature?

Perhaps it is a Shakespeare play, a Charles Dickens or Brontë sisters novel, or a well-loved book from childhood. Most of us will have very different answers to this question. English literature has been extremely diverse throughout the centuries, prone to constant change. Just think about the differences between Middle English and Modern English, the importance of geographical variation, and the impact of an ever-changing political climate on literary development. If we also consider the impact of linguistic change and technological change on book production, it becomes clear that literature in the English language has changed a lot since the Anglo-Saxons first started writing in Old English in the seventh century AD.

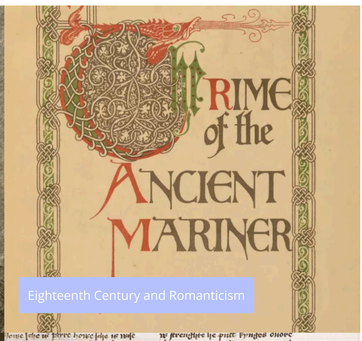
In this online exhibition, *English Literature Through The Ages*, we explore this development of literature in England in the collections held at New College Library. Home to one of the finest collections of medieval manuscripts and incunabula of any of the Oxford colleges, our collections can take you on a journey throughout the centuries. Over the next five pages, we'll travel through both time and space—from fourteenth-century Kent to sixteenth-century Warwickshire and nineteenth-century London—highlighting the work of some of the most famous authors to ever write in the English language.

To start exploring the exhibition, simply select the period you are most interested in below. We do hope you enjoy it.

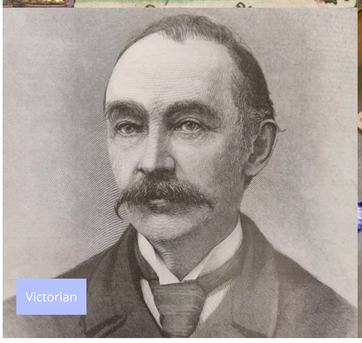
Medieval



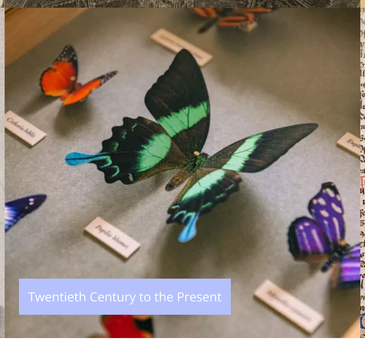
Renaissance and Restoration



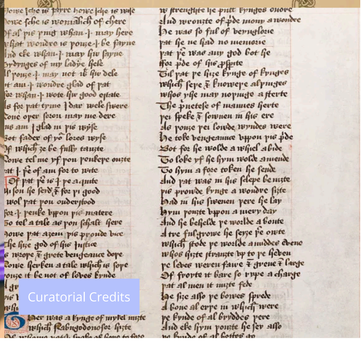
Eighteenth Century and Romanticism



Victorian



Twentieth Century to the Present



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